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THE APACHE RACE.

The romantic wanderings of Catlin, Schoolcraft and some others among the Indian tribes of North America; the delightful tales of Cooper, as developed in his "Trapper," "Last of the Mohicans," etc.; the stirring adventures of Captain John Smith, Daniel Boone, Chamberlin, Carson, Hays and a host of noted pioneers, have invested our Indian races with rare and absorbing interest. But they have also tended to convey false and erroneous impressions of Indian character, and have contributed to misguide our legislation on this subject to such an extent as to become a most serious public burden.

Since the foundation of our government, Indian wars have cost the people nearly four hundred millions of dollars, and the stream of expenditure continues with unabated volume. When the whites were few and the savages many, the cost of keeping them in subjection was measurably less than it has been since the reversal of our respective numerical condition. Whence arises this anomaly? Simply because of our strange ignorance of Indian character as it really exists, and not as we have been taught to understand it by writers of attractive fiction, or the chroniclers of heroic deeds and romantic adventures. This sweeping assertion may be met with one more plausible and popular, because more suggestive, and having the merit of being sanctioned by time. "Is it possible," exclaims the old school debater, "that we have been for more than two centuries and a half fighting, treating, and dealing with our Indian tribes without acquiring a positive knowledge of their character?" Such an exclamation certainly seems to be staggering. It appears to possess the vital force of reason and unanswerable argument; nevertheless, it is exactly true that, as a people, we know little or nothing about this very important matter. Unfortunately, those who have been the best able, from long and careful personal experience to give the requisite information, have also been, for the most part, deficient in educational attainments and the capacity to impart their knowledge; while others have given no evidence of entertaining a just value of its public importance. Satisfied with their own acquirements, they have not sought to publish them for the benefit of others.

The white races of the American people boast European origin, mainly that of English lineage; but how much did the British really know of Americans, even at the period of our Revolution? Is not the history of that struggle indisputable evidence of the most lamentable and inexplicable ignorance on the part of the mother country? But, worse still; after the Revolution, after we had been in strict and closest commercial and political relations with Great Britain for over sixty years, after a second and sanguinary contest with that country, we have only to read the works of some of their travelers to arrive at the superficial and wonderfully erroneous idea of American character possessed by intelligent Britons.

When the two leading commercial nations of the globe, each claiming the highest civilization, speaking identically the same language, and governed by the same general law, contrive to pass two centuries and a half of close intercourse with such unsatisfactory interknowledgeable results, is it strange that a like ignorance should exist between the American people and the nomadic races of this continent?

Causes similar to those which operated as a bar to English knowledge of the American character have interposed against our acquisition of precise information relative to the leading traits of Indian nature. Without being captious, it is assumed that British tourists have, for the most part, approached us with something of an intolerant and preoccupied spirit. They came prepared to encounter ill-bred, semi-educated, uncouth and braggart provincials, rendered more unendurable by their democratic form of government, and political hostility to the time-honored institutions of their own country. Reference can as emphatically be made to the course pursued by the British in India, the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru, the French in Africa and Cochin China. The conquering race seldom care to inform themselves minutely about the condition and characteristics of the conquered, and the results have been renewed sanguinary struggles and immensely increased expenditures.

Our own dealings with the nomads of North America have been but so many chapters of the same record. What has our Government ever done, in a concerted, intelligent and liberal spirit, to acquire definite knowledge of Indian character, as it exists among the tribes which wander over more than one-half the public domain?

The Indian Bureau, with its army of political camp followers, bent upon improving their short and precarious official positions to "turn an honest penny," can scarcely be quoted as evidence of our search of the needed information. Tales of violence and wrong, of devilish malignity, committed by Indians, are rife all along our frontiers; but who ever hears the other side? Who chronicles the inciting causes, the long, unbroken series of injuries perpetrated by the semi-civilized white savages who, like Cain, fled from the retributive justice of outraged humanity, and sought refuge among the copper-colored savages of the woods and the plains?

Naturally ferocious, warlike, revengeful and treacherous as were the aborigines of America, we have educated them to a pitch of refinement in cruelty, deceit and villainy far beyond their normal standard.

If the white man has come to be regarded as his natural enemy, it may be set down as the result of long and murderous schooling. The inherent disposition of the American nomad inclined him to hospitality; but that inclination has been completely blotted out, and its opposite engrafted on his nature. Legends and traditions of white men's ingratitude have been handed down through so many generations, and the experiences of the living have been in such direct accordance with them, that they have become prime articles of their creed.

Keenly alive to a sense of inferiority of their armament, incapable of subsisting large bodies of men for any considerable period, and perpetually engaged in the work of exterminating each other, the several tribes have been reduced to the necessity of employing deceit against force, cunning against courage, artifice against honesty. When the Indian mutilates the dead body of his enemy, he knows as well as the most skillful anatomist that his victim is beyond all capacity of sensation; but it is done to terrify, if possible, all beholders, and as a caution to other invaders, as well as for the enjoyment of a savage gratification. Such deeds, while they horrify, also serve to excite the indignation and strengthen the resolve of civilized and enlightened men; but the aboriginal is incapable of such reflections.

Prominent among the tribes stand the great Apache race. Occupying the largest regions of the public domain, holding possession of a belt which must soon become a grand national highway, wielding a sanguinary sway over two extensive and naturally rich Territories, and filling the most important intervening space between the Atlantic and the Pacific States, we have as little real knowledge of them this day as we possessed when our acquaintance first commenced. Twenty odd years of unremitted warfare have added comparitively nothing to our knowledge, but have cost thousands of lives and millions of treasure.

In point of intellect, in cunning and duplicity, in warlike skill and untiring energy, in tenacity of purpose and wondrous powers of endurance, the Apaches have no equals among the existing Indians of North America. In this wide-spread race are included the powerful Navajo and Lipan tribes, as they speak identically the same language, and almost always remain friendly toward each other, while they war upon all other people. The Apaches proper, or those specially known to us by that name, generally receive their distinctive appellations from some peculiar characteristic, or from the place which they mostly inhabit. The Coyoteros are so named from a fancied or real similitude to the coyote, or small prairie wolf; the Mescaleros derive their cognomen from the mescal plant, which abounds in their country, and is with them a staple article of food. The Jicarillas are so called on account of their manufacture of a small water-tight basket, resembling a gourd, and named *jicara* in Spanish. The Chiricahui, Rio Mimbres, El Pinal, and other branches of the tribe receive their nomenclatures from the localities in which they are generally met.

It is very common for a close observer to meet a group of Apaches one day on the Mimbres or in Apache Pass, and encounter the same individuals at a subsequent period at the head of the *Jornada del Muerto*, or even on the Pecos river, seven hundred miles distant.

It will be observed from this fact, that the distinctive appellations given to them by the Mexican people are purely gratuitous, and do not really exist, the tribe being one, but ranging over an enormous extent of country. Certain individuals affect particular localities, and when at home (if such a term can by any possibility apply to Apaches) they will resort there to enjoy their plunder, hold their feasts, and indulge in temporary rest from active campaigning. The various bands comprising these people number 35,000, of whom 8,000 can be made effective for warlike and plundering expeditions. A lad of twelve years is expected to take his place among warriors of matured years and experience, and is quite as deadly an enemy in their style of warfare. The Navajos are about as numerous, but confine the bulk of their depredations to New Mexico, while the Apaches proper devastate portions of that Territory, all Arizona, and nearly all parts of the Mexican States of Sonora, Chihuahua and Durango. In 1850 the probable fighting force of the Apaches was 10,000 warriors, but they were not nearly as zealously active nor as hostile as now, neither were they so well armed. Their present condition renders them much more formidable than at that period.

A great and grievous mistake has been made in underrating the numerical strength and armament of this tribe. The error has been attended with serious sacrifice of life, great additional cost, vexatious and ineffective policy, and the continued retention, by the Apaches, of the richest mineral region in the Union—not to speak of it as the grand immigrant overland highway to the Pacific coast.

Their frequent and extensive massacres and robberies of immigrant trains have served to place them in possession of first-class rifles and Colt's revolvers. A force of seven hundred Apaches was encountered in Apache Pass by the first two companies of Carleton's column from California, and every individual was armed as above described. Although such large bodies are rarely met, yet it is not unfrequent to find them in companies of from fifty to two hundred, and to underrate such a foe is simply to trifle with our own lives and interests.

On the northern borders of Chihuahua and Sonora are a number of small villages, which are wholly under the control of these savages, and are used by them for the purpose of obtaining arms and ammunition. After a successful raid into Sonora, the stolen animals are taken to one of these towns in Chihuahua, when certain men are selected to convey a number of the beasts to the more settled districts, and to exchange them for the desired articles, receiving a handsome gratuity for the service. During the absence of these factors, their families are retained as hostages for the fulfillment of their obligations. When the plunder is taken from Chihuahua it is, in like manner, bartered off in Sonora. Portions of the race carrying on their operations in Arizona and New Mexico, find little difficulty in having their wants supplied by unscrupulous New Mexican traders.

Within the past forty years, a belt of country comprising the northern frontier of the two Mexican States above named, and covering a space three hundred miles long, east and west, by forty miles wide, has been completely devastated by the Apaches. The once rich and magnificent ranchos of the San Pedro, the Barbacomori, the San Bernardino, together with many towns and villages once flourishing, exist no longer. All is desolation, ruin, death.

The greater hardihood, courage and plucky determination of the American people, together with the superiority of weapons, have saved Arizona from a similar fate, so far; but the struggle has been desperate, unremitting and sanguinary. Immense damages have been suffered. Settlers have been driven out time and again; mines of almost fabulous richness have been abandoned; from Tucson to El Paso, three hundred miles, is one continuous grave-yard, marked throughout the whole distance with the grim and silent monuments of death from Apache animosity.

From the Pima villages to the Pecos river, eight hundred miles, and from Durango to Santa Fe, in New Mexico, the Apache is almost absolute "lord of all he surveys." To accomplish this, argues the existence of numbers as well as intense activity. Depredations, by considerable bodies, are frequently committed in widely separated districts at the same time, and with all his remarkable energy the Apache is not ubiquitous.

A close personal acquaintance of over eight years, under peculiarly favorable circumstances, has given the writer such a knowledge of these Indians as to effectually dispel all his preconceived opinions.

Insensibly, not surely, the conclusions arrived at after a residence of one or two years in Arizona or New Mexico are rejected for fresher ones, and they, in turn, give place to still others, as experiences and opportunities arise. But to meet the Apache upon his own ground, to descend to his level, and interest ourselves in his pursuits; to converse with him in his own language, and gradually convince him of our indisposition to do him harm; to approach him without offensive arrogance, and trust him as our equal; to be apparently under obligations to him for instruction in his modes of life, and at the same time, to let him quietly comprehend that we are not uneasy at his presence, nor afraid of his intentions, is to adopt the only method by which we can arrive at anything like a correct estimate of his inner nature. After all this has been done, and it is the work of labor, perseverance and danger, one may reasonably indulge the conceit that he understands something of the Apache character; but not until then.

He who has once or twice heard the war-whoop of the American savages; who has contended with them in the arena of battle, or who has listened to the tales of their exploits as related by persons who are supposed to be versed in the subject, is very apt to felicitate himself with the belief that he knows all about them. In no special instance is Pope's estimate of a "little learning," more applicable than to this asserted knowledge of Indian character, so much boasted of by our frontier settlers, and casual wayfarers through the regions inhabited by nomadic races.

Cautious, suspicious, treacherous and crafty, the Apache meets all other races on the ground of distrust and doubt. An Ishmaelite himself, all other people are to his perverted senses, objects to be shunned or destroyed. With him, the end justifies the means. Indebted to us for the refinement of his naturally savage instincts, it is but due to him to acknowledge that his schooling has not been thrown away. Excusable as this may appear to some, the fact remains that he is a viper, an untameable, ferocious, sanguinary monster, bent upon the destruction of all with whom he comes in contact, and only restrained by fear. As the interests of the Apache race bear no appreciable proportion to those of civilized men, it becomes a duty to impose that condition of dread, which only will insure their discontinuance of revolting atrocities, and the safety of our people.

The tribal organization of these savages has always been misunderstood. We have taken it for granted that they were similar to other tribes in this respect. But such is not the case. Under every aspect, and at all times, the Apache is a pure democrat. He acknowledges no chief, no ruler, no authority but his own will, nor does he ever delegate to another the right to act in his behalf.

When in camp, a temporary ruler is elected to preside over its affairs, and each person is free to remain or leave at his or her discretion. When on the war path, a leader is chosen to direct proceedings, but he does not presume to exert control over individual proclivities. The warrior may submit to existing authority, but it is entirely optional, and his connection with the party may be sundered at any time he may see fit. The case is different among the Navajos, who, in this respect, in their manufacture of superior blankets, and in the construction of more durable houses, together with an inclination to pastoral life, exhibit much less of the nomadic tendencies.

This absolute personal license and freedom from all control, which are the highest prized rights of the Apache proper, form, also, the most insuperable bar to any permanent treaty relations between them and the American Government. Our intercourse with other tribes led us to believe that a similar tribal organization obtained among Apaches; but it was a fatal error, which has led to a false estimate of their adherence to treaty stipulations. If a hundred or more of them were gathered together to sign a treaty, that instrument would be binding upon none but the absolute signers. Every other individual present, although consenting by such presence, would hold himself entirely free from its conditions. What follows? Those who have not bound themselves continue their original course of depredations and massacres; we accuse them of want of faith and treachery, and forthwith proceed to punish the offenders. Hostilities are again urged on either side, and those who did sign claim that we have violated our contract.

The tribe of which we treat is, undoubtedly, the most nomadic in existence. They build no houses, and never remain more than a week in any one place. Four or five slim and flexible branches of trees, with the but ends sharpened and thrust into the ground, while the taper points are brought together and tied, constitutes the only residence of the Apache. Twenty minutes suffices to erect one, which is abandoned without regret. Even these ephemeral structures are never resorted to except in winter, or when the parties intend remaining for a few days. From eighty to ninety miles a day, for several successive days, are not considered long marches by these people when in a hurry. Their horses are ridden at a sharp pace throughout the journey. If one or more die under the fatigue, or from any other cause, they are immediately cut up for food, and the owners continue their march until opportunity serves to steal another horse.

It is indeed wonderful that with their intensely nomadic habits; their absolute personal irresponsibility; their widely scattered clans; the vast region which acknowledges their presence, and their perfect non-intercourse with all other races, except for war, their language should be so regular and full. Their verbs have the active and passive voices; the infinitive, indicative, subjunctive and potential moods, the present, imperfect, perfect and future tenses; the singular, dual and plural numbers. Their nouns have the nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and ablative cases, with three numbers corresponding to those of the verbs. Their numerals reach to the thousands, and are very similar to our style of decimal enumeration.

Thus we say, two, twelve, twenty, two hundred; three, thirteen, thirty, three hundred; four, fourteen, forty, four hundred. In like manner the Apache says *nakee*, two, *nakeetah*, twelve, *natioye*, twenty, *nat-too-ah*, two hundred; *kahyeh*, three, *kayeetah*, three hundred; *tioye*, four, *tieetah*, fourteen, *tish-tioye*, forty, and *tin-too-ah*, four hundred.

The word *to-dah* means no, and all their negative verbs are formed by splitting *to-dah* so as to place the first syllable at the commencement and the second at the end of the positive verb. For example, the word *ink-tah* means, sit down, or sit, and to command do *not* sit, they say, *to-ink-tah-dah*. *El-chin, yashtee, kashtee*, means, I wish to speak with you, and *To-el-chin-yashtee-kashtee-dah*, expresses, I do *not* wish to speak with you. Quite a number of words, having quite different meanings, are only distinguishable apart from the accent imparted to each; thus, the word *kah* means an arrow, and *kah* also means a rabbit, but the latter is distinguished from the former by a strong guttural accent on the first letter.

For all objects presented to their observation for the first time, they adopt the Spanish name, and then append the Apache aspirate, *hay*. *Peah*, means iron, and before they were acquainted with the relative values of gold, silver, brass and iron, they called gold and brass *peah-klitso*, which means yellow iron, and silver was termed *peah-lick-oyee*, which means white iron; but since then they have adopted Spanish terms, and now call gold, *oro-hay*, and silver *plata-hay*, while brass retains its original appellation of *peah-klitso*.

The strange regularity of their language and the copiousness of their numerals indicate the possession of superior intelligence; but there is an abundance of other proof to this assumption. About fifteen hundred Apaches, including many of the most prominent warriors and councilmen of the Mescalero family, surrendered to the California troops in the winter of 1862. They had been the most formidable scourges of the country, and had never before succumbed to any power. General Carleton located them on the extensive reservation at Fort Sumner, at a point called the *Bosque Redonde*, on the Pecos river, nearly four hundred miles east of the Rio Grande. In the distance, one hundred and twenty-five miles westward, could be seen the grand peak of the *Capitan* Mountain, towering among the clouds, while the intervening space was a rolling prairie, covered with fine grass, and the resort of thousands of antelope and deer. Among the more prominent of our Apache prisoners were *Gianatah*, which means "Always Ready;" *Natch-in-ilkin*, or the "Colored Beads;" *Kloses*, or the "Hair Rope;" *Toos-ah-yay-say*, or the "Strong Swimmer; *Nah-Kah-yes*, or "Keen Sight;" *Nah-tank*, or "Corn Flower," and many others unnecessary to name.

These men lost no opportunity to acquire all the information possible. Such officers as evinced any kindness toward them were besieged with questions, and of a character to excite the liveliest astonishment. On one occasion the writer was addressed as follows:

"*Tata* (you) *Iaday-Pindah Liekoyee* (people with white eyes) say that the world is round. How can that be? I have traveled for many suns, and wherever I went, I found it flat. Tell me how it is."

Pointing to the sublime heights of *El Capitan*, the interrogated party said:

"Do you see yonder mountain?"

"Yes; it is *El Capitan*."

"What portion of it do you perceive?"

"The top."

"Why do you not see the bottom as well? It is broader and larger than the top."

"I do not know."

After this was duly explained the Apache was caused to look at the sun through a piece of smoked glass, in order that he might

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